

# Subject of SNS Design

: The semiotic concept of self as developed by Peirce and Bakhtin/Volosinov

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## Abstract

SNS such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, etc. have surged in popularity, permeating major aspects of our everyday lives with their power as tools of mass communication. My interest with SNS lies not only in its interconnectedness, but also in its interface design mechanism. Based on the semiotic theories developed by C.S. Peirce and Bakhtin/Volosinov, the main argument in this paper is that interface designs of SNS are created not by the designers alone, but through a designer-user community.

Facebook page design, has been changed dramatically several times, invoking widespread complaints. Design production in this kind of interconnected social system arises through the course of the interlocations between the users and the designers. Peirce's illumination of 'self' and 'man-sign' as well as Volosinov's explanation of 'verbal interaction' and 'inner speech' could be relevant for this situation. I propose that these two semioticians offer us plausible explanations regarding the intersubjectivity of SNS design mechanisms and how collective intelligence is formed and works in our era of the online social network.

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## I . Introduction

The question of exactly who is responsible for the continual redesign of the immensely popular social networking service(SNS) Facebook is an intriguing one.<sup>1)</sup> This question becomes more complex when we consider the continual design iterations occurring in parallel on mobile devices including smart phones and tablet PCs. In this paper, I address major features in the ongoing discussions regarding the intricate concepts involved in Facebook's web design. My contention is that designers alone are not wholly responsible for the Facebook interface design, rather, it has been a collective effort between users and designers facilitated by mutually responsive and productive interactions.

As Facebook's subscription base increases in volume and diversity, the website itself is continually compelled to adapt, to better serve and therefore retain its dynamic user base. One principal reason for Facebook's overwhelming success in the midst of numerous competitors is its ability to rapidly adjust its interface design to meet new demands. In order to understand the core concepts behind Facebook's interactive design, it is first helpful to elaborate upon 'design semiotics'. Simply put, the word 'design' shares a historical association with the meaning of 'sign', which is to convey the meaning of a tangible object or intangible idea. Krippendorff contended that "design is making sense of things."<sup>2)</sup>

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1) Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define "social media" as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." According to them, we can consider social media as any applications for user-created content on the web, although I am focusing on SNS media like Facebook. (Kaplan and Haenlein "Users of the world unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media." *Business Horizons* 53:1, The Kelley School of Business, Indiana University, 2010, pp.61-62)

2) Krippendorff, "On the Essential Contexts of Artifacts or on the Proposition That

A novel perspective in which to explore the core mechanism behind SNS interface design is via the semiotic theories proposed by C. S. Peirce and Bakhtin/Volosinov. It remains pertinent to keep the function of social media in mind, although clever mechanisms of design are an inseparable element of successful social networking sites.

## II . Redesigning dynamics of SNS interface

Facebook's founders state that "...Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected". Openness and connectedness are not exclusive domains of Facebook, as nearly all forms of modern mass media could be said to share the same features. But what makes social networking media 'more' open and connected than TV or radio? What has led to the explosion in popularity of social media as a communicative tool, which has been dominated by conventional forms of mass media since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution?

In order to understand the exceptional power of social media, it should be noted that the empowerment of individuals as communicators has flourished as a direct result of the expansion of internet usage since the mid-1990s. In the modern developed world, almost all people have some form of internet access, with personal blogs serving as an easily accessible tool for public communication. SNSs including Twitter and Facebook became popular in the late 2000s and have further accelerated the era of personal media.

In the late 1980s, the World Wide Web has made it possible for consumers to cheaply and easily access information, create their own content and place it in the global public domain. This notion of interactive public communication is perhaps the single most defining and important feature of what we may term the Information Revolution. Internet-based social media has revolutionized communication by making it more about the individual, while simultaneously promoting mechanisms of

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Design Is Making Sense (Of Things)," *Design Issues* 5:2, The MIT Press, 1989, p.9.

democracy and interactivity. This has been greatly aided with the near-ubiquitous availability of internet access due to the popularity of smart phones. It stands to reason that the more mobile computing is used, the more personal content is created. Content created by users is typically as diverse as the demographic it represents, although the majority of such content generally gravitates toward information associated with users' own personal lives or major social issues. Traditional sources of mass media are becoming less popular, as more and more people choose to receive news via SNS.

Facebook has demonstrated a superior ability to facilitate the complex balance between broadcasting diverse content and news that is relevant to a broader audience. It has been said that the critical factor in bringing approximately one billion people to accept Facebook as a major source of information is its user-oriented interface design. The architects behind Facebook's design have consistently prioritized the quality of the users' experience and have openly welcomed dramatic redesign iterations.

Facebook interface design has gone through almost continuous changes since its launch in 2004. Figure 1 shows the original design interface (each Figure in this article displays the user homepage on the left and their profile page on the right).

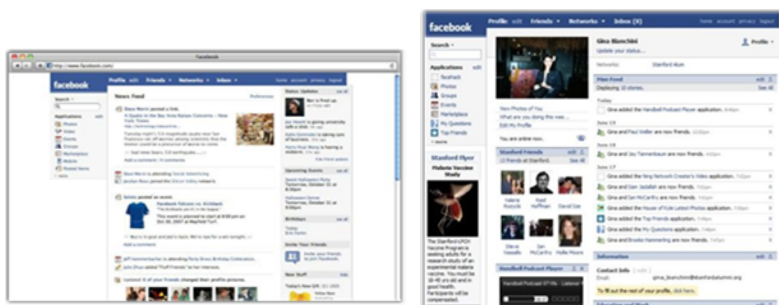


[Figure 1] original interface design of Facebook at launch

Every major iteration of Facebook has brought differences in interface, though the color hue has remained largely the same. The format upon

launch was perhaps the most distinct from its following versions and was at the time called ‘theFacebook’ with a male icon. When launching the first Facebook iteration, Mark Zuckerberg, the founder, designed the profile page to resemble a book.

In 2005, Facebook introduced its own in-house design team, and the second iteration was launched in 2006. Although Version 2 retained the male icon on the title bar, the gradation of the toolbar at the top was removed. The design achieves a refinement in simplicity in each successive generation. The most important interactive design modification was the incorporation of a “News Feed” that relays a stream of news relating to the user’s social circle.<sup>3)</sup> Upon launch, this feature was the focus of criticism, as many who were used to the old Facebook layout feared the exposure of privacy.<sup>4)</sup> However, soon after the initial objections, the majority of users found the “News Feed” to be relevant and useful, and concerns largely subsided. Zuckerberg and the Facebook design team placed an emphasis on finding easier ways for users to navigate the site. In the second version, Facebook also added the “Pages” feature allowing companies to open new profile accounts for their product promotion.



[Figure 2] Facebook design in 2007

Just several months later, Facebook changed the interface again (Figure

3) Refer to <Facebook design> page, <http://www.Facebook.com/design>

4) <http://prowler.uk.to/2011/06/a-history-of-Facebook-designs-part-1/>

2). This version removed the familiar male figure in the header. The major left column became a source of application menus, and the core experiences - profile, friends, network, and an inbox were moved to the top, making them more conspicuous. Another major iteration was launched in 2007, and included dramatic changes to the platform.<sup>5)</sup> Prior to this version, the platform only included applications that appeared on the left column of the site. With the introduction of further applications, Facebook introduced its users to various tools like photos, events and groups. The 2007 version is often claimed to be the favorite Facebook design of many old users.

The next Facebook design was initiated in March, 2009, and introduced a wider format for the site. A bottom navigation bar was added to support a newly-launched online chatting mechanism and applications were moved. Facebook continued to use a three-columned design, but the arrangement was changed; notifications were introduced in the right column, and filters were added to the News Feed on the left.<sup>6)</sup> For this version, the wider format was welcome by many people but the bottom bar was criticized as “ugly and useless.”



[Figure 3] Facebook design in 2011

Figure 3 shows a more recent Facebook layout, launched in 2011. The bottom navigation bar was removed, notifications were moved to the top left toolbar and the search function was made more prominent.

5) See *ibid.*

6) Refer to <Facebook design> page.

The Facebook designers wanted to compel users to read the top items in the News Feed, but it was found to be confusing. Less than a year later, however, the layout was redesigned again, the most important change of which was made in the profile page (see Figure 4).



[Figure 4] Facebook design in 2012

Facebook designers Nicholas Felton and Joey Flynn, who were responsible for redesigning the profile page, rejected the notion that the chronological personal contents should be boxed in a framework with several widgets. In doing so, they discarded a then utilitarian creation for a brand new page design. Their goal was not only to improve the function of the site, but also to provide an interface in which users could tell their stories and recall their memories. The timeline interface was born through the aspiration to convey feelings efficiently. In short, their goal was to create an emotional experience, rather than a chronological document.<sup>7)</sup>

Some users have said that the ‘timeline profile’ is the most significant

7) Refer to webpage in the below where one can find out a detailed explanation on why they developed the timeline interface.  
<http://www.fastcodesign.com/1665414/designers-behind-Facebook-timeline-5-keys-to-creating-a-ui-with-soul>

redesign so far.<sup>8)</sup> However one major criticism has been that it can create confusion, leading to some resistance. This is why at least until August 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 Facebook allowed some users to select their own profile layout from the older and newer versions. There has been continuous backlash and negative responses whenever Facebook redesigns their layout, and sometimes even minor changes to a few of the site's elements.<sup>9)</sup> The company has been receptive to these backlashes and often redesigns them according to feedback. For example, when Facebook introduced the News Feed which revealed a user's friends latest activity as a timeline in 2006, protesters organized "A Day Without Facebook" to show their displeasure at the perceived privacy violations, and declared a "Mission Accomplished" when Facebook subsequently added the ability to hide activity from the News Feed. While monitoring and interacting with their users, Facebook continued to explore new designs and take risks with newer ones in order to adapt itself to a changing user base.

Although many users complained about dramatic design changes, these issues often subsided after redesigned pages were found to be more effective than older versions. This may be due to an emphasis on good functional design and an understanding of common user habits. In the next part of this essay, I put forth the argument that the subject of Facebook design can be framed within the context of a community composed of the users and the designers. We may view this unusual situation from the semiotic perspective of two distinguished scholars, Charles S. Peirce and Valentine N. Volosinov (aka Mikhail Bakhtin), that human beings can function assigns when they are all systematically connected – logically and psychologically. The mechanism of this intersubjectivity in the context of Facebook redesign history will be further explained in terms of semiotic theories.

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8) <http://mashable.com/2011/09/22/Facebook-profile-evolution/#270572011--Timeline>

9) Refer to below page;

[http://www.pcworld.com/article/240327/Facebook\\_redesigns\\_a\\_long\\_history\\_of\\_persistent\\_backlash.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/240327/Facebook_redesigns_a_long_history_of_persistent_backlash.html)



### III. Semiotics for the subject of SNS design

#### 1. Peirce on self

Peirce's exploration of the self in the course of pursuing his semiotic epistemology shows us how our *selves* are connected with each other, and therefore why we do not have to differentiate designers from users. However, I am not suggesting that it is necessary for designers to have their own distinct roles, nor does each of us have to have a private self. Individual uniqueness is discussed by Peirce, but it is not clearly defined if considered as separate from the connection with others.

Peirce explored this concept while criticizing the introspective knowledge insisted on by philosophers like Rene Descartes. At the heart of his critique was the concept of the Cartesian self, which had been regarded as isolated from others or the outer world. Whereas the Cartesian self as a clear and distinct idea was conceived as one taught by intuition, the 'self' Peirce suggested was to be understood only by a series of cognitive activities. On the other hand, Peirce's pragmatic semiotics were developed in depth, during the course of criticizing the psychologism and subjectivism of William James's pragmatism by which the self was conceived as an isolated, independent entity. His Synechism – the doctrine of continuity – “rules out: (a) viewing the mental and the physical as irreducibly different from each other; and (b) treating self and other as essentially exclusive of one another.”<sup>10)</sup>

Peirce's first conception of the self depended on semiotics, especially on thought-sign theory developed in the late 1860s. As mentioned above, his argument that thoughts are to be regarded as signs was a critique of the intuitive knowledge insisted on by Descartes. For Peirce, every thought is a sign because we cannot think without mediating signs. There is no thought that is not interpreted by subsequent thoughts. In Peirce's semiotic epistemology, every thought can be called an interpretant - therefore a sign - since it has the potential to be interpreted. Peirce's

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10) Colapietro, *Peirce's Approach to the Self: a Semiotic Perspective on Human Subjectivity*, SUNY Press, 1989, p.64.

well-known doctrine of semiosis, the infinite process of sign functioning, originated from his early semiotic inquiry on the nature of human cognition. After criticizing the Cartesian introspective self and exploring a theory of thoughts as signs, Peirce defined man as a sign in the final stage of “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities”(1868).

It is that the word or sign which man uses is the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign... Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought(CP 5.313-4).

Although Peirce asserted that a thought is a sign, a man is a thought, and therefore a man is also a sign, he was not understating the importance of the human body in contributing to one's own personality. In actuality, he was concerned with the embodiment of thought as a sign. For Peirce, anything functioning as a sign materializes as some form of embodiment. His elaboration on the emergence of self-consciousness during childhood leads us to understand how important the embodiment is in shaping one's own self. Suspecting that we have intuitive self-consciousness, Peirce described in detail the process by which a child achieves its own sense of self. He stated that “a very young child may always be observed to watch its own body with great attention.”(CP 5.229) Considering its body as the utmost important thing, the child reacts only to what it touches, faces, or tastes.

A child is, for Peirce, not only a sentient being but also an acting, cognitive and communicative being as a thought. In other words, children come to reach levels of self-consciousness by virtue of their ability to interact with their environment and respond accordingly. The impulse toward conversing, according to Peirce, could be regarded as instinctive.<sup>11)</sup> Learning a language gives the child more chances to communicate with others (i.e., other bodies like their own). The instinct to interact and communicate therefore develops a child's self-consciousness. It is

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11) See Colapietro, *ibid.*, p.71 and CP 5.231.

noticeable that, for Peirce, testimony comes to play a role in how the self originates. While learning language skills and communicating with others, a child comes to understand testimonies from outside perspectives. Furthermore, realization occurs, in the contradiction between what is perceived and what is alleged in the testimony of others. For example, a child may realize a perceived testimony is false, when it touches cool a stove despite being warned by parents of being burned. “Thus, he become saw are of ignorance, and it is necessary to suppose a self in which this ignorance can inhere. So testimony gives the first dawning of self-consciousness(*CP* 5.233); and “The discovery of error and ignorance requires the supposition of private self which is fallible”( *CP* 5.234). After a child figures out that a parent’s testimony is correct, the testimony – the language of others – becomes the best evidence for what is true. This reliance on testimony allows a child to understand what is immediately experienced can be erroneous. For Peirce, “the private is synonymous with the erroneous.”<sup>12)</sup>

Out of this negative definition of the self, we can identify Peirce’s Synechism, which is described as “the communal nature of the self, for it is intrinsically bound up with the testimony of others.”<sup>13)</sup> Peirce was the predecessor of those philosophers who tried to argue that personal identity is constituted through relationships to others. Exhibiting erroneousness and ignorance, the human self is identified as a negation. “The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from wha the and they are to be, is only a negation. This is man.”(*CP* 5.317). For Peirce, however, individual self is not just a negation. It is a negation only so far as it is separated from others. Peirce stressed the inseparable nature of the self from its community, but he didn’t deny the existence of individual uniqueness.<sup>14)</sup> It is at the moment

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12) Colapietro, op. cit., p.73.

13) De Waal, *On Peirce*, Cengage Learning, 2001, p.80.

14) For Peirce, even in 1868 the self was conceived to be more than a repository for error. “the possibility of communication does not entail the destruction of

of negation that one's unique self becomes distinguishable.

It could be said, according to Peirce, whereas the private self identified as a negation falls within the category of Secondness, the self as it is, or individual personality retains all the characteristics of Thirdness. He notes that "each personality is based upon a "bundle of habits," as the saying is that a man is a bundle of habits." (CP 6.228). In the context of his pragmatic epistemology, the meaning of a concept is construed as something like a habit.<sup>15)</sup> As far as a man is an idea and therefore a sign, it has also similar features with habits. A habit, which is general, is distinct from each habitual act, which is particular. In "The Law of Mind" (1892) Peirce developed the former justification of the self in his evolutionary cosmology. If private self manifests itself in a single event happening within a moment, personality is apprehended in a certain period of time. "Personality is, like a general idea, not a thing to be apprehended in an instant. It has to be lived in time." (CP 6.155). It is not an instantaneous phenomenon of the self, which is fallible and equated with "immediate self-consciousness" that Peirce was pursuing in the developmental process of inquiry.

Personality was, for Peirce, a kind of coordination or connection of ideas whose nature is to spread continuously and to affect and integrate with others(CP 6.155). When he suggested that personality is a coordination of ideas, it was the teleological character of personality on which he was putting emphasis. By the word 'coordination' he implied a teleological harmony of ideas(CP 6.156). However, this teleology is not necessarily predetermined and therefore, open to the future.

A general idea, living and conscious now, it is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious. This reference to the future is an essential element of personality. Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development,

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uniqueness."(Colapietro, op. cit., p.74)

15) See Mi-Jung Kang, "Meaning as a Habit: Peirce's Theory of Interpretant." *Semiotic Inquiry* 25, Korean Association for Semiotic Studies, 2009.

for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality(CP 6.156-157).

That is, as a thought, an idea or a mind, an individual self has all the characters of a symbol. Just like any other symbol, the man-sign is also in continual growth(CP 2.302).

Peirce did not deny the existence of a private dimension to the individual self, and “our recognition of this dimension contributes to the pathos with which we view the efforts of any self to communicate fully with others.”<sup>16)</sup> However, it has been contended that the most fundamental feature of personal consciousness is the potential for communication in Peirce’s inquiry of self and personality. Peirce’s abstract and idealistic concept of self, of which the nature is intrinsically communal, is elaborated on further by Bakhtin/Volosinov’s illumination of “verbal interaction” which is also concerned with the human tendency for opening, connecting and communicating.

## 2. Bakhtin/Volosinov on Verbal Interaction

Bakhtin/Volosinov<sup>17)</sup> also rejected the egocentric model of self. According to them, the self is not something given innately to an independent subject. It remains fluid rather than fixed, being situated in its circumstances and affected by other selves in the process of socialization. Bakhtin’s argument on ‘verbal interaction’ which has its ground in the inter-relations of language, consciousness, and ideology gave further substance to Peirce’s notion of the self. His notion of verbal interaction, which was the earlier form of dialogism, provides us with

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16) Colapietro, op. cit., p.79.

17) Volosinov was a member of Bakhtin’s circle. It is believed both *Freudianism and Marxism* and *The Philosophy of Language* published by the name of V.N. Volosinov were actually written by Mikhail Bakhtin. Although some scholars pointed out the change of philosophical position between Volosinov and Bakhtin, I will refer to these two people as one whose point of view has developed as time went by. Therefore Bakhtin/Volosinov will be referred to as just Bakhtin, when referring to his earlier texts published by Volosinov as well as his later texts.

an excellent explanation on inter-subjectivity (i.e. the communal nature of the self).

Freudian psychology greatly influenced Bakhtin, as did Saussure's semiology and Marxian materialism, but he criticized each of them and further developed his own theory. It makes a good start for examining his argument for subjectivity if we first consider his critique of Saussurean semiology. Unlike Saussure, who distinguished the difference between langue and parole, Bakhtin, like Peirce, refused the dichotomy of an abstract language system and its individual uses. According to Bakhtin, the opposition that Saussure made between langue and parole was equal to the opposition of society to individuals. Bakhtin, a Marxist, could not accept the concept of an individual isolated from social and historical contexts. Individual consciousness, from his perspective, does not occur from within the mind, but is constituted by social relations. He objected to the concept of personal consciousness separated from the outside world and insisted that individual consciousness is a dynamic event occurring between the inner and outer world. It is a sign through which inner and outer realities meet. For him, psychological experiences were nothing but social activities expressed by various signs.<sup>18)</sup> He proposed an amendment of Saussurean linguistics by positing four social factors in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*(1929), one of his major works.<sup>19)</sup> In short, Bakhtin's treatment of the sign as external, organized socially, concretely historical, and inseparably linked with voice and authority was a critique of the established language theory.

As a result of his semiotic inquiry, Bakhtin came to resist two major tendencies of philosophy of language in his time: abstract objectivism and individual subjectivism.<sup>20)</sup> The philosophers who took the former tendency regarded language as a code independent of its interpreters.

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18) V.N. Volosinov, *Marxism and Philosophy of Language* (trans. as *Language and Ideology* in Korean by Ki-Han Song), Seoul: Pureun-Sasang, 2005, pp.152-154.

19) Refer to Caryl Emerson, "Outer word and Inner Speech: Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and Internalization of Language" *Critical Inquiry* 10:2, University of Chicago Press, 1983, pp.247-248.

20) Volosinov, *op. cit.*, pp.77-108.

Among them are Rene Descartes and Ferdinand de Saussure. The philosophers included in the latter group were faulted for grounding the message exclusively in the individual consciousness. In other words, the former was concerned with the myth that language makes poets, while the latter with the myth that poets make language. Bakhtin, suggesting this opposition is inherently untrue, tried to synthesize the two extremes. For him, every individual participates in two different but interrelated activities; s/he is involved in relationships with others in particular speech acts, and at the same time with the internal relationships between the outer world and her/his own consciousness. If these activities – what Bakhtin called ‘verbal interactions’ – are constant and indispensable for our social lives, it would be impossible to consider an individual psychic phenomenon as solely internal and independent of the environment around it.

Bakhtin described the psychic phenomenon as “a boundary one” and the psyche as a “social entity” formed by ideological signs. Objecting to the idealistic Freudianism, Bakhtin did not consider that personal consciousness – including unconsciousness – arises from within people. On the contrary, he believed that social intercourse influences outer speeches, while outer speeches affect inner speeches and then in turn, inner speeches form consciousness. According to Bakhtin, “the very act of introspection is modeled on an external social discourse: it is self-observation, communion with the self, the understanding of one’s own inner sign.”<sup>21)</sup> His fundamental redirection is of two forms; here directed, on the one hand, the relation between consciousness and the world, and on the other hand, the relation between the self and others. These are grounded on the interrelating of language (or signs), consciousness and ideology. For Bakhtin, no explicit distinction between inner and outer speech exists, since individual consciousness is expressed only through the mediation of signs, whether they are inner or outer. That is to say, if one’s consciousness could not be expressed and interpreted

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21) Volosinov, *ibid.*, p.66.

by oneself, it could hardly be said that consciousness exists. We may contend that it is not true, following Bakhtin, that experiences organize expressions. What may occur is the reverse.<sup>22)</sup> Bakhtin described the dialogical formation of consciousness similar to that of utterance, in which signs or expressions that are inevitably social are always tinted by ideologies.

In fact, not even the simplest and dimmest apprehension of a feeling - say, the feeling of hunger not outwardly expressed - can dispense with some kind of ideological form. Every apprehension, after all, must have inner speech, inner intonation, and the rudiments of inner style.<sup>23)</sup>

Bakhtin's argument that no consciousness exists that is not externalized may be supported by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's experiments. Vygotsky's psychological science was one of the major inspirations for Bakhtin in answering his own questions, for example, "How does a particular circumstance impress a personality?" and "How do outer speeches become inner speech?" In the analysis of the internalization of interpersonal speeches, Vygotsky attended to the third stage of young children's language learning - the stage of egocentric speech.<sup>24)</sup> He observed a child of approximately three years of age, who talked to themselves twice when meeting obstacles. This is an example of externalization of conversation with themselves, commenting on and predicting the results of an action. According to Vygotsky, such externalized self-talk is a natural dynamic of problem solving.<sup>25)</sup> Additionally, he proposed that this talk is sensitive to social factors

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22) Volosinov, *ibid.*, p.145.

23) Volosinov, *ibid.*, p.148.

24) See Emerson, *op. cit.*, and also Charles Bezerman, "Intertextualities: Volosinov, Bakhtin, Literary Theory, and Literacy Studies" in *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning*, Edited by Arneha F. Ball et al., Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp.53-65.

25) Lef Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, revised and edited by Alex Kozulin, The MIT Press, 1986, pp.24-26.



because egocentric speech occurs only in a social context, for example, when the child assumes it is being understood by others. Vygotsky argued that egocentric speech is a “direct outgrowth of speech which had been from the start socially and environmentally oriented.”<sup>26)</sup> The most significant basis for my argument in the experiments of Vygotsky is that children in their stage of egocentric speech are in fact internalizing their external verbal interactions.

#### IV. Conclusion

Bakhtin's notion of ego or self, based on his 'verbal interaction', parallels Peirce's in that both tried to establish that people interconnect with each other without precluding the unique experience of self consciousness. The statement by Bakhtin that "every utterance is the product of verbal interaction" summarizes this argument. In the case of Facebook interface design, such utterances are visual signs produced during the interactive and communicative process of designing.

In conclusion, it could be said that minds or signs of the users and designers are in continuum, constructing a 'collective intelligence' in designing a still better interface for the social media. This sort of collective intelligence could be called 'designer-user community' following Peirce's pragmatistic terminology. As Mihail Nadin pointed out, “interface is the meeting place between two different entities that are supposed to come in contact, to be brought together - that is, to communicate. It follows that interface has the nature of a sign.”<sup>27)</sup> By communicating with each other, both designers and users of Facebook are collaborating in making a better design. The designer-user dynamic inherent in the architecture and management of Facebook continues to redesign the site toward this end. By interacting and communicating, whether in

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26) Emerson, op. cit., pp.253-254.

27) Mihail Nadin, "Interface design: A semiotic paradigm," *Semiotica* 69:3, Mouton de Gruyter, Jan 1988, p.272.

conflict or in harmony with one another, members of the Facebook community steer their way toward an optimal interface design.

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## SNS 디자인의 주체

: 퍼스와 바흐친/블로쉬노프의 기호학적 자아 개념을 중심으로

강미정

스마트폰의 보급 이후 페이스북 같은 소셜네트워크서비스(SNS)는 많은 사람들에게 주요한 대중매체로 자리잡았고 그 인기가 가속화되고 있다. 이 논문에서는 SNS가 익명의 개인들을 서로 연결시켜 상호작용을 활성화한다는 점뿐만 아니라, SNS 인터페이스 디자인이 상호주체적 메커니즘에 기반한다는 점에 주목하고 있다. 본고는 찰스 S. 퍼스와 바흐친/블로쉬노프의 주체성에 대한 기호학적 이론에 기초하여 SNS 인터페이스 디자인의 주체가 디자이너에 국한되지 않으며 복수의 디자이너와 사용자들로 구성된 공동체로 확대된다고 논변한다.

퍼스의 ‘자아’와 ‘인간-기호’ 이론과 바흐친/블로쉬노프의 ‘언어적 상호작용’과 ‘내적 발화’에 대한 이론은 페이스북 같은 SNS 인터페이스 디자인 및 재디자인 메커니즘에 대한 매우 그럴듯한 해명을 제공한다. 가령 페이스북이 2004년 창립된 이후 웹 디자인이 지속적으로 변화된 과정은 창립자 마크 주커버그를 포함한 페이스북 디자이너들과 페이스북 사용자들과의 끊임없는 소통의 경위를 보여준다. 이러한 사례는 전문 디자이너와 대중적 사용자 사이의 경계를 허무는 상호주체성의 존재에 대한 증명이라고 할 수 있다.

열쇠어: 인터랙션디자인, 소셜네트워크서비스(SNS), 기호학, 찰스 S. 퍼스, 바흐친/블로쉬노프, 상호주체성, 집단 지성

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